Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 11 to 20 are cancelled and claims 21 to 30 are added as set forth hereinafter.

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1 to 20 (Cancelled).

21.   (New)   A method for detecting the actuation of an operator-controlled element actuable to assume different degrees of displacement wherein different operator-controlled functions of said element are realizable in dependence upon the degree of
5   actuation thereof, the method comprising the steps of:

actuating said element against a spring force with two degrees of displacement being characterized by two different spring constants;

providing a sensor to detect the displacement of said
10   element and output a signal value (U) proportional to said displacement;

determining a quantity (dU/dt) characterizing that one of said spring constants corresponding to the instantaneous degree of the displacement of said element; and,
15   supplying said quantity (dU/dt) to a detector for detecting one of the operator-controlled functions of said element in

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dependence upon said quantity (dU/dt).

22.   (New)   The method of claim 21, comprising the further steps
of:

determining a time-dependent course of said signal value;

selecting a slope of said time-dependent course of said
signal value (U) as said quantity (dU/dt) characterizing the
corresponding spring constant; and,

detecting said one of said operator-controlled functions in
dependence upon the slope of said signal value (U).

23.   (New)   The method of claim 22, comprising the further step
of detecting said one of said operator-controlled functions when
the slope of said time-dependent course of said signal value (U)
lies in a pregiven region.

24.   (New)   The method of claim 23, wherein said pregiven region
is defined by a threshold value.

25.   (New)   The method of claim 23, comprising the further step
of selecting said pregiven region so that the time-dependent
course of said signal value (U) associated therewith occurs only
via an automatic reset of said operator-controlled element.

26.   (New)   The method of claim 25, wherein said automatic reset
is achieved with an abrupt reduction of said spring force.

27.   (New)   The method of claim 26, wherein said abrupt reduction

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of said spring force is effected by the spring constant assigned

to the corresponding operator-controlled function.

28.   (New)   The method of claim 21, wherein said

operator-controlled element is an accelerator pedal of a motor

vehicle; one of said operator-controlled functions is a kick-down

function or an escape-switch function to overcome an activated

5   speed limiting; and, at least one degree of displacement of said

accelerator pedal in the vicinity of a stop is assigned to said

one operator-controlled function.

29.   (New)   The method of claim 21, comprising the further step

of detecting one of said operator-controlled functions only when

said one operator-controlled function is detected several times

within a pregiven time interval.

30.   (New)   An arrangement for detecting the actuation of an

operator-controlled element actuable to assume different degrees

of displacement wherein different operator-controlled functions

of said element are realizable in dependence upon the degree of

5   actuation thereof, the arrangement comprising:

said element being actuable against a spring force with two

degrees of displacement being characterized by two different

spring constants;

a sensor for detecting the displacement of said element and

10   outputting a signal value (U) proportional to said displacement;

means for determining a quantity (dU/dt) characterizing that

one of said spring constants corresponding to the instantaneous

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degree of the displacement of said element; and,

   a detector for detecting one of the operator-controlled

15 functions of said element in dependence upon said

quantity (dU/dt).

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